

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Delete the heading at page 4, line 6:

~~Means for Solving the Problems~~

Delete the heading at page 4, line 19:

~~Effect of the Invention~~

Delete the heading at page 6, line 1:

~~Description of Symbols~~

Delete the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 2 and ending at page 6, line 8.

Replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 25 with:

Figs. 8A and 8B show schematic views for describing the state of the amorphous silicon film ~~being molten~~ that is melted when the amorphous silicon film is irradiated with the laser light. The laser light is converted into a linear beam 16 laser light ~~16~~ by a condenser lens 15 ~~formed~~ located at the output part of the linear-beam shaping optical system (see Fig. 7). Linear laser light beam 16 is directed to the main surface of amorphous silicon film 2. The distribution of the energy density along the width of the laser light is, for example, ~~the~~ a Gaussian distribution. As shown by a laser-light profile 30, the energy density of the condensed laser light is largest at the central portion of the widthwise direction of the linear light beam 16. The energy density gradually decreases with increasing distance outward from the central portion. As the laser light ~~16~~ used for ~~the~~ irradiation, laser light with an energy-density gradient of at least $3 \text{ (mJ/cm}^2\text{)}/\mu\text{m}$ or more in the widthwise direction is employed. The energy density is constant in the

longitudinal direction of laser light beam 16. Thus, the laser light for irradiation has a so-called ~~top-flat~~ top-hat shape.